

Progress Report: Sebastian

STUDENT	PERIOD	LESSONS
Sebastian	Mar 2026 – Sep 2026	5 lessons

Sebastian — Progress Report

April–September 2026

Sebastian's lessons show a clearer, freer approach to bowing and phrase connection, alongside continuing work on tension, anticipation, and accuracy at speed. On April 2, the teacher explicitly heard more life and lightness in Sebastian's playing of Mozart's Fifth Concerto, with more room to shape its gestures. In September's Sibelius work, changes to the bow motion produced a freer attempt, and Sebastian reported less effort and fatigue on the G string. These are meaningful observations, though the lessons do not establish that the same ease is yet reliable across all passages.

I

Development and current work

Connecting sound through bow changes has remained a central theme. In May, a bow change was interrupting the line: one stroke lost momentum and the next sounded like a fresh start. In the Sibelius introduction on September 2, the teacher again heard gaps in the singing line and asked Sebastian to sustain notes through their full length. On September 16, practising the Sibelius octaves with no gaps improved the connection through the shifts. That later result shows what the passage can sound like with continuous bow motion; keeping it dependable in performance remains a practice goal. The September lesson also found that simplifying the gesture before up-bows let the bow travel more freely rather than choking the sound.

Ease without loss of musical intensity is another continuing priority. April's Mozart work called for a lighter, more characterful stroke rather than a rushed or athletic one. In the April and May orchestral excerpts, Sebastian worked on controlled spiccato, economical left-hand motion, and a light bow hold; the Schumann's fast, tight pitch patterns and fourth-finger preparation still needed attention in May. September's Sibelius lessons likewise addressed excess pressure. On September 2, the teacher heard over-pressing in one bow-contact attempt, approved later attempts, and Sebastian reported feeling less tense while still needing to think

about the motion. By September 16, scales and arpeggios were being used to establish a minimal-pressure feeling before carrying it into repertoire. Tension was still reported in fast Shostakovich passages, so ease there should not be assumed.

Preparation and expressive shape increasingly guide the technical work. Earlier Schumann practice called for the whole hand to anticipate the fourth finger rather than adding it late. In September, the teacher applied a related principle to fast passages, shifts, and Sibelius cadenza arpeggios: prepare the next shape and begin the arm motion early instead of reacting at the last moment. This is a current method, not yet a documented improvement across those passages. In Sibelius, Sebastian also worked on making contrasts specific—the veiled opening, growing arpeggios, warm sixths, insistent octaves, and the cadenza’s changing colors. The *Moderato assai* initially sounded too much like an etude, so its dramatic direction remains a clear musical priority.

The most recent practice directions are to use scales or simple material to check a low-pressure left hand; anticipate patterns and shifts, especially in the cadenza; and practise the revised Sibelius bowings, continuous sound, and stronger contrasts. Earlier assigned etude and excerpt work is recorded below, but its outcome after May is not assessed in these lessons.

II

Work studied and assigned

- **Concerto repertoire:** Mozart, Fifth Concerto, third movement (April 2); Sibelius Concerto—introduction and exposition (September 2), then *Molto moderato* after rehearsal 3, *Moderato assai*, and cadenza (September 16).
- **Orchestral excerpts:** Schumann scherzo and Mozart Symphony No. 39, fourth movement (April 29–May 21); Shostakovich Symphony No. 5 fast passages (September 16).
- **Technical work:** uneven bowings and stroke variations, including collé, détaché, martelé, and legato; Ševčík bow-change work and Number five (April–May); the Milstein fingertips-only bow-hold exercise (May 21); scales, arpeggios, bow-contact exercises, and shift preparation (May–September).
- **Etude practice assigned on May 21:** two or three etudes daily from Dont Op. 37, Fiorillo, and Mazas Op. 36, working toward Rode Nos. 1–9. The supplied lessons do not document completion or a later assessment of that plan.